Group 1

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

**T**his afternoon, following a series of threats and defiant statements, the presence of Alabama National Guardsmen was required on the University of Alabama to carry out the final and unequivocal order of the United States District Court of the Northern District of Alabama. That order called for the admission of two clearly qualified young Alabama residents who happened to have been born Negro. That they were admitted peacefully on the campus is due in good measure to the conduct of the students of the University of Alabama, who met their responsibilities in a constructive way.

I hope that every American, regardless of where he lives, will stop and examine his conscience about this and other related incidents. This Nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.

Summarize this section in your own words.

What is the tone set by the greeting?

Using context clues, what does unequivocal mean?

What event is being described in paragraph one? What can you infer from this description?

Do you agree with the last sentence? Why/why not?

Group 2

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

Today, we are committed to a worldwide struggle to promote and protect the rights of all who wish to be free. And when Americans are sent to Vietnam or West Berlin, we do not ask for whites only. It ought to be possible, therefore, for American students of any color to attend any public institution they select without having to be backed up by troops. It ought to be possible for American consumers of any color to receive equal service in places of public accommodation, such as hotels and restaurants and theaters and retail stores, without being forced to resort to demonstrations in the street, and it ought to be possible for American citizens of any color to register and to vote in a free election without interference or fear of reprisal. It ought to be possible, in short, for every American to enjoy the privileges of being American without regard to his race or his color. In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would wish to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. But this is not the case.

Summarize this paragraph in your own words.

Why is it ironic or unexpected that white soldiers are not the only ones called to duty during times of war?

How does JFK want to make his audience feel by including the last three sentences? Do you think those sentences were effective? Why/Why not?

What affect do the specific examples given have on the audience?

Group 3

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

The Negro baby born in America today, regardless of the section of the State in which he is born, has about one-half as much chance of completing a high school as a white baby born in the same place on the same day, one-third as much chance of completing college, one-third as much chance of becoming a professional man, twice as much chance of becoming unemployed, about one-seventh as much chance of earning $10,000 a year, a life expectancy which is 7 years shorter, and the prospects of earning only half as much.

Summarize the paragraph. What is the main idea?

Why did JFK include such specific statistics?

If this paragraph were taken out, how would the tone of the speech be changed?

What are some possible reasons the African American person in 1963 would have a shorter life expectancy than a white person?

Group 4

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis men of good will and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right. We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution.

Summarize the paragraph in your own words.

Explain why the following statement is so powerful. ” This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right.”

Select a different sentence and explain its impact in the paragraph.

Group 5

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who will represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay?

Describe the main idea of this paragraph in your own words.

Why is the purpose of JFK asking questions in the speech?

Describe any similar examples of injustice that connects to this paragraph in the world today.

Group 6

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

My fellow Americans, this is a problem which faces us all -- in every city of the North as well as the South. Today, there are Negroes unemployed, two or three times as many compared to whites, inadequate education, moving into the large cities, unable to find work, young people particularly out of work without hope, denied equal rights, denied the opportunity to eat at a restaurant or a lunch counter or go to a movie theater, denied the right to a decent education, denied almost today the right to attend a State university even though qualified. It seems to me that these are matters which concern us all, not merely Presidents or Congressmen or Governors, but every citizen of the United States.

Summarize this paragraph in your own words.

Which groups of people do you think JFK is speaking to? (working class, whites, Northerners, Southerners, etc..)

Do you think the statistics described by JFK are still accurate? Explain and give examples.

Group 7

John F. Kennedy- Civil Rights Address, June 11, 1963

1.This is one country. It has become one country because all of us and all the people who came here had an equal chance to develop their talents. We cannot say to ten percent of the population that you can't have that right; that your children cannot have the chance to develop whatever talents they have; that the only way that they are going to get their rights is to go in the street and demonstrate. I think we owe them and we owe ourselves a better country than that.

2. Therefore, I'm asking for your help in making it easier for us to move ahead and to provide the kind of equality of treatment which we would want ourselves; to give a chance for every child to be educated to the limit of his talents.

3. As I've said before, not every child has an equal talent or an equal ability or equal motivation, but they should have the equal right to develop their talent and their ability and their motivation, to make something of themselves.

Summarize the previous paragraphs in your own words.

1.

2.

3.

What ten percent is JFK referring to? Why is this unfair?

Does everyone in today’s society have the same opportunities ‘to make something of themselves’? Why/why not?